

**BOARD OF OPTOMETRY**

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
PRESCRIBING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

**Q: NOW THAT I HAVE MY TPA CERTIFICATION, DO I HAVE TO OBTAIN A DEA NUMBER?**

A: You are not required to obtain a DEA number if you will not be prescribing controlled substances. However, the TPA certification permits you to prescribe oral analgesics that contain codeine or hydrocodone, which are schedule III drugs and a DEA number is required in order to prescribe any schedule III drug. Therefore, you will be required to obtain a DEA number in order to prescribe the above mentioned drugs.

These are the only compounds that require California TPA-certified optometrist's to have a DEA number to prescribe. All other authorized prescribed agents do not require DEA registration.

**Q: HOW DO I GET A DEA NUMBER?**

A: With the enactment of new TPA legislation (See "New TPA Law" on this website), TPA doctors may now obtain a DEA registration number. The registration application form may be obtained by contacting the DEA at 1-800-882-9539.

When completing the registration form remember that California OD's are mid-level practitioners and only have access to Schedule III Narcotic drugs. The only Schedule III Narcotic drugs available to California OD's are codeine with compounds and hydrocodone with compounds. Note that prescribing these drugs can only be for ocular related pain for a maximum of three days. If the pain persists after three days, the patient must be referred to an ophthalmologist.

Further, there is no state controlled substance number and with the above specified Schedule III Narcotics, California OD's can prescribe, administer, dispense and procure these drugs.

**Q: WHAT DRUGS CAN I PRESCRIBE ONCE I OBTAIN MY DEA NUMBER?**

A: The DEA has designated California optometrists with TPA certification as "mid-level practitioners", which means they can prescribe, administer, dispense and procure only certain defined drugs. According to California law, those drugs are codeine with compounds and hydrocodone with compounds.

Note: Prescribing these drugs can only be for ocular related pain for a maximum of three days. If the pain persists after three days, the patient must be referred to an ophthalmologist.

**Q: DO I NEED TWO DEA NUMBERS IF I HAVE TWO OFFICES?**

A: Yes. If an optometrist plans on procuring and storing controlled substances at multiple office locations, multiple DEA numbers will be required. Inventory and dispensing of controlled substances are tightly controlled by federal regulations; therefore, an optometrist cannot procure controlled substances and then "distribute" them to various offices. If you have questions about obtaining multiple DEA numbers for branch offices, please contact your local DEA office.

**Q: CAN AN OPTOMETRIC GROUP GET ONE DEA NUMBER FOR THE WHOLE OFFICE?**

A: No. Each provider that plans on prescribing, administering or dispensing controlled substances should have their own DEA number.

**Q: WHAT DO I TELL PHARMACISTS WHO REFUSE TO FILL MY PRESCRIPTIONS WITHOUT A DEA NUMBER?**

**A:** A DEA number is required only for prescribing Schedule III drugs.

**Q: WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED ON PRESCRIPTIONS I WRITE?**

**A:** Any prescription or order by an optometrist comprising written specifications for ophthalmic lenses pursuant to an eye examination must contain the following minimal information: Name, address, telephone number and license number of the issuing optometrist; his/her signature; issue and expiration date; and patient's name.  
(For Further Details Please Refer to CCR Section 1565.)

**Q: HOW CAN I ADVERTISE MY TPA STATUS?**

**A:** TPA optometrists may advertise that he or she is certified by the Board of Optometry to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents.

**Q: WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITING A PRESCRIPTION FOR SCHEDULE III DRUGS?**

**A:** You are required to use "tamper-resistant" forms approved by the California Board of Pharmacy and the Department of Justice for ALL written Schedule III prescriptions and to report certain prescribing information to the State CURES program as follows:

- All written controlled substance prescriptions for Schedule III narcotics must be on the approved, "tamper-resistant" prescription form. Phone and fax orders for Schedules III medications are still permitted. Fax orders should not be written on an ordinary prescription form. Faxed prescriptions written on "tamper-resistant" forms will result in a voided prescription and the pharmacy will have to contact the prescriber to ensure the authenticity of the prescription.
- California law requires prescribers dispensing Schedule III drugs to submit prescription information to the CURES program. Information about the CURES program can be accessed at <http://ag.ca.gov/bne/trips.php> or by calling (916) 319-9062.
- Federal law requires that all written prescriptions presented by Medicaid beneficiaries must be on "tamper-proof" prescription pads. You can obtain compliant prescription pads as described in the answer to the question below.

**Q: HOW CAN I OBTAIN "TAMPER-RESISTANT" PRESCRIPTION FORMS THAT COMPLY WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS?**

**A:** You may order "tamper-resistant" prescription pads from security prescription printer companies that have been pre-approved by the California Department of Justice and Board of Pharmacy. The directory of approved companies can be found at [www.ag.ca.gov/bne/security\\_printer\\_list.php](http://www.ag.ca.gov/bne/security_printer_list.php).